841 147 171 among South-American Indians. Since the sixteenth century, travelers have often been amazed by the insignificance of the menses of Indian women. Thus: "In the period of about one year which we spent in that country, ordinarily associating with the people, we have never seen the women have their menses" (J. de Léry, Voyage faict en la Terre du Brésil, Gaffarel, Paris, 1880, Vol. II, Ch. 17, p. 92); and more recently: "no one notes when they go through certain difficult periods peculiar to their sex" (Tocantins, "Estudos sobre os Mundurucus," Revista do Instituto Historico e Geographico Brasileiro, Vol. 40, 1877, p. 113). On the other hand, the text just cited could be interpreted in two different ways: the vocal inflexion of the informant suggested that the expression edẽdé edẽdé edẽdé signified "(this) moon (yes), (this) moon (no), (and this) moon (again)", meaning "every other moon" and not—as it is also grammatically possible—"moon, moon, moon," that is "every moon." The first sense would constitute a sort of physiological scandal, but remains, nevertheless the most probable. In fact, it is possible that the periodic indispositions are less important and more irregular among South-American women than is the case among the whites.

842 [209] The Nambikwara have a very clear idea of the relationship between sexual intercourse and conception. It is frequent that an Indian clarifies that paternity relationship is one of the blood, and not classificatory, by forming a ring with the thumb and index finger of the left hand, into which he introduces the index finger of the right hand which he glides back and forth. After this demonstration, he indicates the child saying: tayette, tayette, "my child, my child" (3).

3. From the same observation made by Roquette Pinto (loc. cit. p. 255) more than twenty years earlier, one can conclude that this gesture does not constitute an individual innovation, but a stylized social conduct.

842 833 197 Etymology points out the connection between the two phenomena: in the eastern dialect, "copulate" is translated nitnedjutu and, in the central and southern dialects, tamindige, tuyitare. These three terms are attached to the respective forms [64] for "father": ahuinosu (nosu = man, al), tamindé, uaire. On the other hand, in the northern

842 dialect, it is: "to copulate," iruja, juũreli, while "father" is uãinko;
833 but one refers rather to sexual relations by the term ʃikiʃikiʃi, whose
197 evocative value is reinforced by an appropriate gesticulation. This term corresponds, in the other dialects, to the compounds uinikuʃiʃu (a1), iekejakãtige (b1), "to copulate with rhythmic movements." Likewise, in the western dialect, "to copulate" is expressed by ãinʃore, even though the demonstration evoked at the beginning of this paragraph uses the term ninfʒore.

842 We have not been able to elucidate clearly the indigenous theory of conception (conceive: uetnẽdige, b1; from uẽtte, "child"). It implies apparently that the sperm coagulates in the uterus and progressively forms the child. The man alone would play a positive role while the woman would be reduced to that of a simple receptacle. Nevertheless, the woman is held responsible for sterility, whether it be attributed to a particular condition or to age.

834 It is difficult to say if the numerous prohibitions attached to
842 sexual relations have as a conscious end to assure conditions favorable to reproduction, or if they depend on more remote beliefs. The first hypothesis is hardly credible, for the Nambikwara are not very eager to have children. The quest for food is too hard, too difficult, to permit the care of several children at the same time, especially when they are still incapable of taking care of themselves; and especially, during the nomadic period a woman cannot carry more than one nursing child, besides the heavy basket. Thus the first steps of the child are impatiently awaited. At any rate, several prohibitions have, as a definite goal, the limitation of sexual activity. Besides the prohibition of incest (1), it is not good to copulate "moonlit

835 1. The prohibition concerning incest is formulated as follows:

(7) tuãde takenãde tamĩndige manhatte (b1)
for a sister and brother to copulate is bad

[834] but it does not seem that the infractions are punished other than by collective disapproval. A very equivocal attitude concerning a couple (A71 and a72) and the use, in their regard, of kinship terms communicated with repugnance, and manifestly contradictory to the system, makes one believe that it could be a case of parallel cousins. We have not been able to find a sure case of incest between blood relatives.

834 nights" kanaro?etẽndige (b1); inversely, nights without moon are
842 particularly approved, as well as rainy periods. In 1938 the rains
834 were late, and the first shower came in September after six months of
[833] total drought. The event, so long awaited, was immediately celebrated by B1, who did not even wait for night to have sexual relations with his youngest wife b2. However, day-time relations are rare, and the act was carried out more ostensibly than usual, behind the thin palms of a shelter. Immediately afterwards B1 supplied a spontaneous commentary on meteorological prohibitions. Sexual relations are also, at least theoretically, forbidden between husband and wife
[856] [65] from the birth of the child to the time when he can walk. This event is hurried along by rubbing his legs with the juice of a non-identified plant (touri?iri, c) "so that he will walk quickly, so that another can be made" (1); but, by "another," is understood, un-

[71] 1. The same custom existed among the ancient Tupi. Cf. Cardim, Tratado da terra et da gente do Brasil, new ed., Rio-de-Janeiro, 1925, p. 170.

doubtedly sexual intercourse rather than their result, rarely welcome:
[847] the Nambikwara women often have recourse to abortion, and they are familiar with a great number of plants and roots for that use. We were not able to obtain a specimen.

831 The attitude of the Nambikwara toward things pertaining to
832 love can be summed up in their formula tamɨndige mondage, translated literally, if not elegantly: "To make love is good." We have already mentioned the erotic atmosphere which fills daily life. Love affairs hold the interest and curiosity of the Indians to the highest degree. They are eager for conversation on these subjects, and the remarks exchanged in the camp are filled with allusions and hidden
[833] meanings. However, sexual relations are rare, and the prohibitions which limit them explain this state of affairs only partially. The thing truly responsible seems rather to be indigenous temperament.
[147] In the course of the amorous games to which couples give themselves over so willingly and so publicly, and which are often very far advanced, we have never been able to note the beginning of an erection. The pleasure looked for seems to be less of the physical order
833 than playful and sentimental. Sexual relations usually take place at night, and often not far from the fires of the camp. More often the couple draws back about a hundred meters into the neighboring bush. This departure is noted immediately, and gives rise to the most

833 lively jubilation. Comments are exchanged, jokes made, and even the young children share in the excitement whose motive they are well acquainted with. Sometimes even a small group of men, young women and children, take off in pursuit of the couple and watch the details of the operation through the branches, whispering among themselves and muffling their laughter. The principal actors do not appreciate these goings on at all. However, it is better to take part in them as well as to suffer the taunts and mockeries which greet their return to camp. It also happens that a second couple follows the example of the first and seeks, in their turn, the solitude of the bush. The Indians know and use two positions for coitus. We were not able to find out if they are practiced indiscriminately or if the choice depends on a rule. Whatever the case, besides the posterior position (toĩtelosu, a1; inkɔlékenore, b1--to copulate from the rear) so frequent in South America, another position (yataʔãdige, b1) can be described as follows: the woman on her back, the man facing her, the right leg only between the legs of the woman and the left leg outside, so that the two superimposed bodies give the general form of an X.

[66] PARENTS AND CHILDREN

593 163 847 The Nambikwara have few children. Couples without children are not rare, one or two children seem to be a normal number, and it is exceptional to find more than three in a household. Sexual prohibitions and the economic conditions on which they are based which also give rise to abortions, explain this situation. Apparently also Nambikwara formerly had the custom of beating to death the children whose mothers died during childbirth. According to the informants, this practice has been abandoned today.

853 855 The mother gives the breast lying on her side with the child pressed against her. These feedings have no fixed time. The child nurses when he wishes and as much as he wishes. Weaning takes place towards the end of the first year, but up to the age of two or three the infant returns from time to time to the maternal breast.

[514] When a child eliminates at the camp site or inside the hut, the father or mother carefully buries the excrement by digging a small hole which is quickly filled with dry sand. A great deal of care is taken to prevent the children from soiling the camp site and the objects placed near them.

4: Oberg E-5 (1949)1953
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619 which cause sickness, they have given the magical herbs whose smoke blinds the dangerous *enêwo*, and the techniques which will drive away the storms. Thus the shaman operating on a symbolic level continues the struggle for survival which has been defined for the Nambicuara by the nature of their adjustment to their physical environment and their relationships to one another.

THE LIFE CYCLE

BIRTH

833 [842] The Nambicuara recognise sexual intercourse (*wiesâenditsu*) as the cause of pregnancy (*halâjitsu*). This act takes place in the woods while the husband and wife are out hunting or collecting, for it is considered improper to have sexual intercourse in public, even at night around the common camp fire. If a shaman should see a couple in 756 sexual embrace while practicing his rites it would 833 spoil his power. Although shamans use a special hut when calling their *enêwo* there is always a chance that they may see a couple in the sexual act, so every effort must be made to avoid this [834] danger. Shamans themselves abstain from sexual intercourse for 2 or 3 days before getting in contact with the spirits.

843 There appear to be no food taboos surrounding pregnancy among the Wakîtisu. The husband continues hunting and collecting as usual, but he must avoid working too hard in the field for [847] fear of causing his wife to abort. Women do not practice abortion, and the Nambicuara did not mention any medicines used for this purpose. [832] Honey is considered conducive to sexual vigor and is used by young couples. Childless marriages [843 586] are attributed to sterility in women, and a man may abandon his wife for this reason.

844 Birth takes place in the house, or in the camp if the family is out hunting. Just before expecting [824] the birth of a child the expectant mother drinks the juice of certain herbs which are believed to facilitate birth. The husband and two older women assist in the delivery. The woman kneels on the ground and is supported by her husband. The umbilical cord is tied with a certain vine and then cut with a bamboo sliver. Among the Kîtîarlu it is bitten off by one of the midwives. The placenta is buried at the place of birth and when the umbilical cord dries and falls off, it, too,

[P. 102 (B)]